



VOLUME VI, NUMBER 1

Team NutritionConnections

SHIRLEY WATKINS



This first back-to-school season of the new millennium has all of us thinking about the future. What a great time to focus on how we can help millions of students develop eating patterns that will make their future a healthy one. That's a big challenge - and it will take real teamwork in your school and community to make it happen. This issue of Team Nutrition

Connections features our new healthy school nutrition environment initiative. It will help you develop teams to tackle this important education and health issue.

The majority of our children and teens do not have healthy eating habits (see examples in Secretary Dan Glickman's article on page 2). We have an opportunity to help reverse that trend and make an investment in their learning readiness as well as their short- and long-term health. We can help reduce the obesity epidemic and the risk of diet-related chronic diseases. And most importantly, we can help our students learn to enjoy eating healthy, so it will become a lifetime habit.

The National School Lunch, School Breakfast and After School Snack Programs can be part of the solution. Schools are making great progress toward implementing the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines in menus that meet the new nutrition standards. But it is becoming clear that it will take more than healthier menus to change what students eat at school.

We encourage you to order *Changing the Scene*, our new Team Nutrition Guide to Local Action (page 7). Use the kit to select and train a team and to take a careful look at your school's assets and barriers to healthy eating. Use your most creative thinking to maximize assets and find out-of-the-box solutions to the barriers. Then prioritize your strategies to reflect the views of the members of your team. Some schools may start with adequate time to eat; others may tackle adding more menu choices, increasing nutrition education, or looking at snack bars or vending machines. You may find that school policies need to be developed or revised or that funding priorities need to be re-thought.

Thousands of schools operate child nutrition programs in communities all across this country. All operate under the same federal statutes and regulation. But there are significant differences in the quality of meals and the environment in which meals and other food choices are made available to students. The key to those differences is often local leadership. When school and community leaders share a commitment to sound nutrition as an integral part of education, local decisions will reflect that commitment. Let's make the most of our golden opportunity to begin this new millennium with a strong focus on nutrition and healthy children.

Shirley R. Watkins

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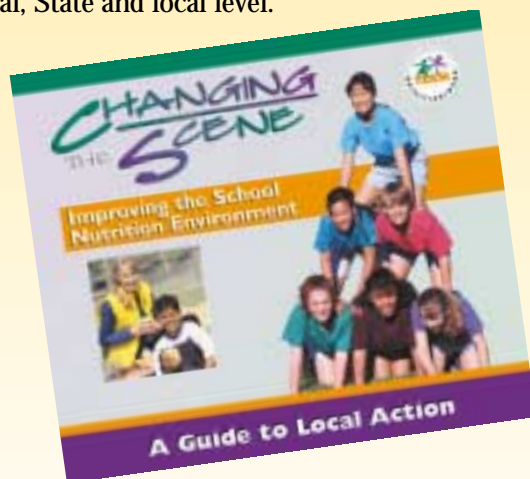
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INTRODUCING...

Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment

A Guide to Local Action

In our continuing efforts to address school environment issues that influence students' eating and physical activity practices, we are introducing Team Nutrition's newest tool kit. Premiered at the Annual National Conference of the American School Food Service Association and subsequently at the annual meetings of the Society for Nutrition Education and the American Culinary Federation, this kit was developed to promote discussion of healthy school environments at the national, State and local level.



Guest VIEWPOINT

SCHOOL BOARD NEWS

Healthy eating helps our students make the grade

By Dan Glickman, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

5/16/00 – Ensuring that children are eating nutritious meals is primarily the responsibility of parents and at-home caregivers. But with most children eating at least one meal a day at school, healthy eating must be a part of the daily curriculum, just like math and social studies.

Despite the best efforts of local school districts, however, the truth is that many of our students are failing healthy eating. Consider the following:

- Only 2 percent of schoolchildren meet all the recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid. Sixteen percent do not meet any of them.
- Fewer than 15 percent eat the recommended servings of fruit on any given day.
- Fewer than 25 percent eat the recommended servings of grains.
- Only 30 percent consume the recommended milk group servings.

These statistics should concern us all. Habits learned early last a lifetime, so poor eating by today's children will probably mean poor eating by tomorrow's adults.

Childhood obesity is becoming a growing epidemic and a pressing public health crisis, leading to higher levels of disease at earlier stages of life. Type II diabetes, formerly confined almost exclusively to adults, is increasingly afflicting children and teens. As children drink less milk and more soda, they are not achieving peak bone mass in their early years, increasing their susceptibility to osteoporosis as they get older.

All this exacts an economic, as well as a human, cost. As a Nation, we spend \$71 billion a year to combat heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes associated with poor nutrition.

As a former president of the school board in Wichita, Kan., I understand the nutrition challenges schools face.

At the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), we are doing what we can to help. We have required that the national school lunch and school breakfast programs be consistent

with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Our Team Nutrition program provides nutrition education materials for state agencies to use with local schools. And our Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children teaches good nutrition, even at the preK level.

But it is not easy to turn sound nutritional standards into sound nutritional practices. Snack bars and vending machines offer students other eating options that neglect nutrition guidelines. These options create competition for school cafeterias, which often feel pressure to compromise nutritional standards.

And with so many local school boards properly focused on important issues, such as educational standards, test scores, and school safety, we must continually remind people that nutrition and classroom performance cannot be separated. The child who eats right is better prepared to learn and excel.

Many schools are rising to the challenge. Using the USDA's Team Nutrition model, they have involved their communities in the effort to improve their students' diets.

Successful schools now prepare and present nutritious foods in a way that will appeal to children. They provide adequate time to eat. They provide sufficient cafeteria space to accommodate their students, so that they are not feeding some children at inappropriate times.

These schools also have comprehensive school nutrition policies, so that students get the same nutrition message in the dining room, the classroom, and throughout the school all day long.

School nutrition is becoming a focus of key leadership organizations. The National Association of State Boards of Education has a new publication, *Fit, Healthy and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide*, that includes an excellent chapter on school nutrition.

NSBA has been out front with an online school health policy data base. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention just released a School Health Index to help schools measure where they stand and how they can improve. And a group of leading medical associations recently developed a joint statement on Healthy School Nutrition Environments.

This kind of leadership, however, will amount to very little unless it sparks widespread, grass roots mobilization. Parents, teachers, administrators, elected officials, the foodservice sector, and other concerned people must come together in their communities, pooling resources and expertise to help solve this problem.

President Harry Truman, who signed the National School Lunch Act over a half-century ago, would be proud to know that his initiative has led to higher nutrient intake among many of our Nation's children.

But he also would urge us to redouble our efforts, to ensure that every child, toddler, and adolescent—rich and poor, urban and rural—is eating the right foods for a healthy and productive lifestyle that lasts into adulthood.

Healthy School Nutrition Environments: Promoting Healthy Eating Behaviors

The American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Dietetic Association, National Hispanic Medical Association, National Medical Association, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) call on schools and communities to recognize the health and educational benefits of healthy eating and the importance of making it a priority in every school. At the same time, the associations are encouraging their members to provide leadership in helping schools promote healthy eating for our Nation's children. Establishment of local policies that create a supportive nutrition environment in schools will provide students with the skills, opportunities, and encouragement they need to adopt healthy eating patterns.

Prescription for Change: Ten Keys to Promote Healthy Eating in Schools

Ten keys have been developed to assist each school community in writing its own prescription for change.

- Students, parents, educators and community leaders will be involved in assessing the school's eating environment, developing a shared vision and an action plan to achieve it.
- Adequate funds will be provided by local, state and federal sources to ensure that the total school environment supports the development of healthy eating patterns.
- Behavior-focused nutrition education will be integrated into the curriculum from pre-K through grade 12. Staff who provide nutrition education will have appropriate training.
- School meals will meet the USDA nutrition standards as well as provide sufficient choices, including new foods and foods prepared in new ways, to meet the taste preferences of diverse student populations.
- All students will have designated lunch periods of sufficient length to enjoy eating healthy foods with friends. These lunch periods will be scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible.
- Schools will provide enough serving areas to ensure student access to school meals with a minimum of wait time.
- Space that is adequate to accommodate all students and pleasant surroundings that reflect the value of social aspects of eating will be provided.
- Students, teachers and community volunteers who practice healthy eating will be encouraged to serve as role models in the school dining areas.
- If foods are sold in addition to National School Lunch Program meals, they will be from the five major food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid. This practice will foster healthy eating patterns.
- Decisions regarding the sale of foods in addition to the National School Lunch Program meals will be based on nutrition goals, not on profit making.



American Academy
of Family Physicians



American Academy of Pediatrics



National
Medical
Association



AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION
"Your link to nutrition and health."

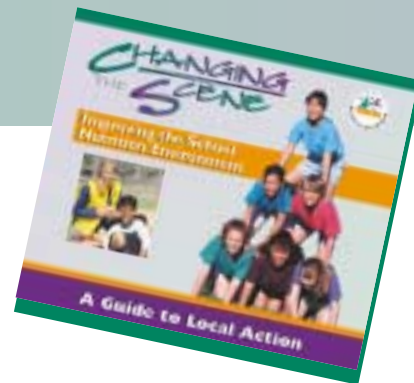


United States Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service

This Guide's for You

CHANGING THE SCENE

Improving the School Nutrition Environment



USDA developed this kit of materials to help you take action to improve your school nutrition environment.

This guide is the centerpiece, and it:

- Gives you general guidelines for establishing your team and planning for change
- Explains each of the six components of a healthy school nutrition environment
- Provides criteria for determining success
- Offers ideas for getting activities started
- Presents guidelines for identifying, contacting, and working with all of the groups you want actively involved on your team
- Provides tips for attracting media attention and working effectively with the media
- Cites references and resources

The kit also includes:

Support Materials

- **Improvement checklist** to help you determine how your school nutrition environment measures up
- **Handouts** - fact sheets and other educational tools
- **Samples** of the kinds of materials you may want to develop

Other Resources

- **Video** - to help you educate audiences about a healthy school nutrition environment and focus their attention on the issue
- **PowerPoint presentation** - to use when talking to groups and urging them to join your team in improving the nutrition environment in your school. A set of transparencies of the PowerPoint slides and a hard copy of the presentation script are provided for those who prefer this method of presentation
- ***The School Environment, Helping Students Learn to Eat Healthy*** - explains why it is important to create a school environment that supports healthy eating - 50 copies of this brochure, plus a black and white and color master for reproducing





- **CD-ROM** - includes the PowerPoint presentation; a small utility program you can use to pull up the presentation in case you don't have PowerPoint; a script for the presentation; a set of transparencies; the various support materials which can be modified to fit your local situation and reprinted; and *The School Environment, Helping Students Learn to Eat Healthy* brochure for printing in black and white or color, as well as a copy suitable for professional printing (with the printing specifications)
- **Call to Action** - joint statement from five national medical associations and the U.S. Department of Agriculture that explains the importance of healthy eating to children's long-term health and well-being
- **Chapter E, "Healthy Eating"** - reprint from the National Association of State Boards of Education's school health policy guide, *Fit, Healthy and Ready to Learn*. This chapter discusses establishing school policies to support a healthy school nutrition environment
- **Infobrief: Commercialism in Schools** - reprint of an information brief of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development that discusses commercialism in schools
- **CDC Brochure** - order form for a free copy of the *School Health Index: A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide* available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

This kit developed in collaboration with:



Society for
Nutrition
Education



Association for Supervision and
Curriculum Development



Center for Nutrition
Policy and Promotion



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION



Society of State Directors
of Health, Physical Education
and Recreation



U.S. Department of
Education



American School
Food Service Association



Cooperative State Research,
Education, and Extension Service
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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
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PRINCIPALS
promoting excellence in school leadership



American Dietetic Association
Your link to nutrition and health.sm
www.eatright.org



Council of Chief State
School Officers



Team Nutrition, USDA



National School Boards Association



Association of School Business
Officials International



CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL
AND PREVENTION



National Association of
Elementary School Principals





Success Stories

California Project LEAN Takes the Fizz out of Soda Contract

California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition) in collaboration with its regional contractor, the Health Education Council (HEC), stopped an exclusive beverage contract from being signed by the Sacramento City Unified School District Board. The HEC formed a coalition of concerned parents, teachers, and advocates within the school district to speak out against the contract. The Center for Commercial-Free Public Education, a national non-profit organization that addresses the issue of commercialism in public schools, also joined the coalition. The Center provided facts on exclusive contracts around the Nation.

The coalition had phenomenal success at educating the school board to put the health of adolescents as a priority and not “sell-out” in an attempt to find funding for the district. When California Project LEAN discovered this beverage contract was being considered, they were told it was a “done deal.” The coalition was able to sway the board’s decision through media contacts, community mobilization, and individual contact with board members and the superintendent. The concerns of each board member were addressed in a packet of research, including facts on adolescent nutrition and obesity, commercialism in public schools, and the increased prevalence of fast food in schools. *The Sacramento Bee* published several articles, editorials and letters to the editor in opposition to the contract. Additionally, all of the major television and radio stations in Sacramento reported on the issue.

As a result, the school board created a task force to recommend broad nutrition and physical activity policy for the district. This task force will assess the nutritional value of meals, snacks, and drinks offered in school cafeterias, concession stands, and vending machines.

Students lead effort to address short lunch periods

In Bozeman, Montana, sixth grade students, tired of rushing through lunch, decided to do something about the short lunch periods in their middle school. They enlisted the support of the Team Nutrition Coordinator, and after various meetings with other students, school administrators, the

school foodservice manager and a parent advisory group succeeded in changing the daily schedule to accommodate three lunch periods for the upcoming school year. In the interim, the foodservice created a “grab and go cart” with reimbursable cold lunch sack meals and milk to help with the congestion. Kids now have more time to eat and, of course, socialize – an important goal at lunch! This effort shows the importance of using a team approach to develop short- and long-term solutions. The principal was instrumental in getting students and parents involved and in advocating for more staff support during the lunch periods. This was a perfect example of school administration listening and responding to student and parent concerns.

SUCCESSTALK (successtalk@nal.usda.gov)

SUCCESSTALK is intended as a communication tool to link school health professionals, child nutrition educators, principals, teachers, parents and community members who are interested in creating a healthy school nutrition environment. Members can share success stories, resources, information and innovative program ideas that encourage healthy eating and physical activity habits.

SUCCESSTALK is not intended to replace other Federal and State communication channels through which information regarding program regulations and policy is issued. Questions regarding policies should be addressed to your State agency.

To subscribe:

Send a message to: majordomo@nal.usda.gov
In the body, type:
subscribe successtalk your name <your email>

To unsubscribe:

Send a message to: majordomo@nal.usda.gov
In the body, type: unsubscribe successtalk

For more information:

Food and Nutrition Information Center
10301 Baltimore Blvd., Rm. 304
Beltsville, MD 20705
301-504-5719
Email: fnic@nal.usda.gov



Improving the School Nutrition Environment

Please send one free* copy of *Changing the Scene* to:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Check all that apply: ☐ parent ☐ teacher ☐ school administrator
☐ school foodservice staff ☐ other: _____

(If more than one person from a school requests a kit, your name and phone number may be shared with other interested people from your school.)

Please identify the school where you will be using the kit to make improvements in the nutrition environment:

School Name: _____

School Grades (K-12): _____ Total School Enrollment: _____

School Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How did you find out about the *Changing the Scene* kit?

☐ Team Nutrition Home Page

☐ Association Meeting/Conference: _____

☐ In a magazine, journal or newsletter from the following organization: _____

☐ Other: _____

Fax this form to: Team Nutrition at 703/305-2549

Or mail to: Team Nutrition, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture,
 3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1010, Alexandria, VA 22302. 703/305-1624

Or order the kit online at: www.fns.usda.gov/tn

* While supplies last.

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Healthy School Nutrition Environment

“School and community leaders, with a shared nutrition commitment, are needed to focus attention on this serious problem and find solutions.”

— **Dorothy Caldwell**
Deputy Administrator
Special Nutrition Programs
Food and Nutrition Service

For More Information

- Contact us via the Internet at this web address:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn>
- E-Mail us at Team Nutrition's Internet mailbox:
teamnutrition@fns.usda.gov
- Write to us at:
3101 Park Center Drive,
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